

Appl. No.: 09/678,996
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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

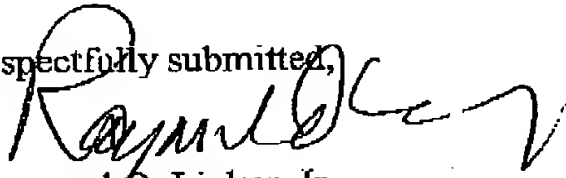
By this response, rejected Claims 16, 18, 20, 23 and 24 have been cancelled in order to place this application in condition for immediate allowance containing previously allowed Claims 1-16, 19, 21 and 22. The subject matter of the rejected product claims will be pursued in a divisional application.

Since this response places this application in condition for immediate allowance, entry of this amendment is clearly appropriate.

To complete the record, Applicants submit herewith a copy of the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement, which is being filed by U.S. Mail today under separate cover together with a copy of the European Search Report which has been issued for the corresponding European Divisional application with product claims only. The accompanying PTO-1449 lists those prior art documents which are not already of record in the present application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,


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CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office at Fax No. (703) 872-9306 on the date shown below.


Janet F. Sherrill

February 9, 2004
Date